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US History BLE

11/5/2012

Letter to Congress

It is called the American Civil War because it is the only time in history that the United States of America has fought itself in a war.  Being that both sides were Americans and the war was fought on American soil, to this day it is the costliest war in American history.  The 620,000 American deaths that occurred during the war are more than the American death in every other war combined.  With the abolition of slavery, the South, which previously used slaves as the primary labor force for their agricultural exports, was left without a powerful economy.  However, with the abolition of slavery came the freedom of blacks, a major step forward in American values.  How could we call ourselves a country of free men when there were so many who were bound by slavery and didn’t have the same rights as other men?  The Civil War brought about unprecedented change to our country.  We moved from confederate federalism, in which the state governments hold more power than the national government, to the federal system which we know today, in which the federal government has more power.  With the end of the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln brought about the first national banking system, national currency, national taxes on income, and the first highly protective tariffs.  This combined with the transfer of political power from southern planters to northern industrialists created the environment for the United States to be one of the emerging super powers in the early 1900’s.  To ignore such an influential part of American history is not only disrespectful for those who it affected (ie. those who fought, the slaves who were freed, others who were affected) but downright irresponsible.

People visiting the memorial first walk on a pathway which leads begins to recede into the ground, signifying that this was a time in which the nation fell.  The path then splits in two showing how the nation separated, each side going around a giant statue of Abraham Lincoln, who is in the middle because he wishes to combine the two sides.  One side of the path faces the north and has all of the names of the Union states written on the wall as well as the American Flag, which the Union side used, flying in the middle island of the memorial.  The other side of the path faces the south and has all of the names of the Confederate states written on the wall along with the Confederate flag flying on the other side of the island in the middle of the memorial.  The paths then converge back together to symbolize how the nation was united once again in the end.  As the visitors leave the memorial, the pathway ascends to ground level signifying how the nation rose once it united as one once again.

The memorial is made of black granite and has a smooth white marble path leading through it.  The stark contrast between black and white in the memorial represents the differences between black people and white people during the time of the Civil War.  The abolition of slavery was one of the major reasons that the war was being fought, and the memorial represents this in a very subtle and symbolic way.  The main events that the memorial is representing are the separation and joining of the Confederate states and the Union states.

The American Civil War memorial will represent the most influential war in American history.  A perfect blend of pure beauty and symbolism, the memorial will be an attraction that will bring knowledge to the people while also paying homage to those whose lives were affected by the war.

The memorial will slope downwards and then split into two different sides one representing the union and the other the confederacy. Along the walls will be a list of all of the states that where member of the Union or Confederacy depending on the side that you go along. The downward slope into the memorial will help people understand the difficult time that brought about the civil war which split this nation into two parts. By having the choice of choosing between two sides people realize the separation that occurred between states. Lincoln who will reside in the middle of the memorial is trying to bring the nation back together and is faced with a daunting task. People will be able to leave flowers under each states name. The upward slope leading out of the memorial shoes the uphill battle that the civil rights movement had even after the civil war. The whole monument is below ground level and a person is surrounded by black marble showing the dark times during the civil war. People should be able to connect to the decline of the US as it went into the civil war and how the nation separated and was brought back together by Abraham Lincoln who carried the nation out of the ground and into a new era.

The Civil War memorial will be off to the side of the reflecting pool next to Constitutional Ave. The statue of Abraham Lincoln that will sit in the middle of the monument will be oriented so that one side faces the Lincoln Memorial while the other side will face the White House. The Civil War and President Abraham Lincoln were responsible for shaping the nation into what it is today. There is no land mark within America that represents the modern United States like the White House. Without President Lincoln this great nation would not be as it is today with liberty and equality for all. This is why we have one side of the statue facing the White House. The other side of the memorial point to the Lincoln Memorial. The reason for this is because while the Civil War was responsible for many great changes in ideas within the United States it also brought mass amounts of death. One of the casualties of the fighting between the North and the South was President Lincoln Himself. By pointing one end of the Civil War memorial towards Lincoln memorial we are reminded of our fallen leader and the casualties of the war.

It might be controversial how we didn’t include much about the huge fatality rates during the war. Nearly 620,000 Americans died during the war which is higher than every other war combined. Descendants of people who fought in the Civil War may not be happy with this. We didn’t want to focus on the issue of mortality rates because it was American killing American and the point of the memorial is unification of this nation. Many times the Civil War was dividing households and we wanted the focus to be not on the separation of the confederacy but the unification of all the states. Another potential controversy is that this will be the second memorial with Abraham Lincoln. Many people may not want to have their tax money spent on a memorial that they represent a war that already has a memorial. However while Abraham Lincoln does have a memorial the Civil War does not. The reason that Abraham Lincoln has a statue in this memorial is because he was responsible for the conclusion of the Civil War and the unification of the nation. Without Abraham Lincoln the Civil War may have had far worse results.